Maine Maritime Museum Library
243 Washington Street
Bath, Maine 04530-1638
(207) 443-1316, ext. 328, 336

Inventory for
Manuscript Collection
MS-323

Fossett Family Papers

Inclusive dates: 1848-1886
Bulk dates: 1860-1880

by
Tracy Lamaestra
(edited by Nathan Lipfert)
October 2012

Shelf feet: 2 linear feet
Number of boxes: 3
Accession no. 98.123.25-34

Cataloged as part of the Merchant Mariners Muster Project, funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through the Council on Library and Information Resources

Copyright Restrictions

The material described herein is the physical property of the Maine Maritime Museum Library. **Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or the various items, or to their legal representatives, or to Maine Maritime Museum.** For further information, consult the library staff.

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be *"used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship or research."* If a user later uses a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if fulfillment of the order is judged to be in violation of copyright law.

It is the user's responsibility to understand the copyright law concerning the use of the historical documents contained in this library.

Copyright © 2012 by the Maine Maritime Museum

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Maine Maritime Museum Library.

Abstract

Fossett Family

Papers, 1848-1886 (Bulk dates: 1860-1880)

2 manuscript size boxes, 1 horizontal box (2 Shelf feet)

Ship captain, mariners and farmers from Bristol, Maine.

Account and log book records of Captain Henry Fossett. This includes seven account books, two log books and one personal account book, which includes some vessel records. Vessel records of *Acklam* (Schooner), *Canima* (Brig), *Charlie and Willie* (Schooner), *Edith Rose* (Bark), *Emma Cushing* (Bark), *J. M. Sawyer* (Brig), *Jasper* (Bark), *Liberia* (Bark) *Ocean Eagle* (Brig), *President* (Schooner), *Samson* (Brig), *Sumer Side* (Brig) and *Thomas Pope* (Bark). Personal account book of Henry Fossett when at Bristol, Maine. The collection is arranged as follows: Series I. Vessel records, Series II. Personal accounts.

Gift from Philip Baker, 1998.

MS-323. Accession No. *98.123.25-34.*

Related material available at repository, acc. no. *98.123.22.*

Finding aid available in repository; folder-level control.

Added entries—persons:

Fossett, Algeron

Fossett, Henry, *Captain*

Fossett, James S.

Fossett, Leonard

Fossett, Mary

Added entries—places:

Bristol, ME

Added entries—corporate bodies (including vessels):

Acklam (Schooner)

Canima (Brig)

Charlie and Willie (Schooner)

Edith Rose (Bark)

Emma Cushing (Bark)

J. M. Sawyer (Brig)

Jasper (Bark)

Liberia (Bark)

Ocean Eagle (Brig)

President (Schooner)

Samson (Brig)

Sumer Side (Brig)

Thomas Pope (Bark)

Added entries—key terms:

Accounts

Account book

Africa

African trade

Fish trade
Freight and freightage
Log-books
Lumber trade
Merchant seamen
Rum
Seamanship
Ship captains
Shipping
Sugar trade
Voyages and travels
Wages

Acquisition

The Fossett family papers were a gift from Philip Baker on September 23, 1998, accession no., *98.123.25-34.* Other objects belonging to Captain Henry Fossett, including a sea chest, navigational instruments, tools, weapons, and charts, were donated at the same time.

Provenance

The collection belonged to Captain Henry Fossett. The donor is the great-great grandson of Captain Fossett. The donor's great-grandmother Sproul was originally a Fossett, daughter of Captain Henry Fossett. The papers were handed down through family members.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on the use of these materials for study or research.

Physical Condition

This collection is nineteenth-century account and log books. All books are either quarter or half-bound in leather with marble paper covered front and back boards. Two of the account books (account book 1873-1882 and log book 1868-1871) have missing covers with broken signatures. All show excessive wear and deterioration with dog-eared pages. Leather spines are either torn or distressed. Pages are soiled, stained or discolored. Take note of:

Account book (1848-1867) - A signature has broken free from the spine and a page is missing from the account book.

Account book (1873-1882) - The upper portion of the first page is missing. Some pages are dog eared.

Account book (1874-1881) - Has broken signatures where some pages have broken free from their stitching.

Log book (1850-1886) - Has three newspaper clippings adhered to one of the pages.

Log book (1868-1871) - Several pages are missing from the log book.

All loose pages with creases and/or folds were flattened with a tacking iron at low to medium heat. Some of the penciled writings are faded on loose papers.

Biographical Notes

Captain Henry Fossett (b. 1823-d. 1896)

Captain Henry Fossett [Jr.] was born in Bristol, Maine in 1823 to Henry Fossett Sr. (b. 1793-d. 1865) and Mary Sproul (b. 1795-d. 1877). He married Sally M. Myers (b. 1833-d. 1902) in 1853 in Bristol. They had daughters: Hattie L. (b. 1862-d.?), Cora L. (b. 1864) and Lillian Albertine (b. 1872-d. 1928). The family resided in Bristol,[1] in the village of Round Pond.

Captain Fossett was a sailor in earlier years along with brothers Leonard and James.[1] He was also master of the *Olive Elizabeth* (Schooner), *President* (Schooner), *Judge Blaney* (Brig), *Acklam* (Schooner), *Canima* (Brig), *Emma Cushing* (Bark), *Ocean Eagle* (Brig), *J. M. Sawyer* (Brig), *Edith Rose* (Bark), *Samson* (Brig), *Jasper* (Bark), *Liberia* (Bark), *Thomas Pope* (Bark) and *Jasper* (Bark). In particular, he commanded the *President* (Schooner) for seven years in the coasting and West Indies trade. Captain Fossett was also involved in the cross Atlantic trade. He voyaged at least twice on the *Ocean Eagle* (Brig) and five times on the *Liberia* (Bark) to Africa.[2]

Capt. Fossett kept detailed account books for vessels and log books for voyages with various cargoes such as shooks, lumber, shingles, molasses, coal, tobacco, fish, rice, sugar, coffee, rum, pails, soap, pork, flour, kerosene and fruit. Captain Fossett also recorded seamen accounts and wages in the account books.

Captain Fossett maintained a personal account book. He recorded the building of a house and barn in Bristol, Maine. Waterman Hatch provided the products for construction. Hatch was a mill man and neighbor. Fossett employed him to build as well. Family member accounts were also documented by him in the personal account book. This included his brothers, Leonard and James, work at the Bristol farm. The bills for Mother Mary Fossett were listed and paid by Captain Fossett as well. Moreover, he captured daily farm life and employment of hired hands at the Bristol farm in the personal account book.[3]

Captain Fossett died on April 24, 1896 in Medford, Massachusetts.[3] His wife died on March 16, 1902.[1]

Leonard Fossett (abt. 1821-d. 1897)

Leonard Fossett, brother of Henry, was born in Bristol, Maine about 1821 to Henry Fossett Sr. (b. 1793-d. 1865) and Mary Sproul (b. 1795-d. 1877). He married Elizabeth M. Meyers (b. 1831-d. 1923) on August 17, 1852 in Boston. (Sister, Sally M., married to Capt. Henry Fossett). They had daughter Emily H. (b. 1853). The family resided in Bristol.[1]

Leonard was a sailor in earlier years along with his brothers Henry and James. By 1870, he was a farmer in Bristol.[1] He assisted Captain Henry Fossett in the maintenance of the Fossett farm in Bristol. Leonard also worked for Henry at the farm and held personal accounts with Henry at Bristol.[4] Leonard died on May 1, 1897 at the age of 76 in Bristol.[1]

James S. Fossett (b. abt. 1830-d. 1874)

James S. Fossett was born in Bristol, Maine about 1830 to Henry Fossett Sr. (b. 1793-d. 1865) and Mary Sproul (b. 1795-d. 1877). He married Abby C. Sprague about 1859.[5] They had child Vivia M. The family lived in Bristol and then Portland.[1]

James was a sailor at age 23 along with his brothers, Henry and Leonard.[1] He assisted Captain Henry Fossett with the farm in Bristol. Henry also employed James at the family farm in 1856 and 1858.[4] In 1860, he was a house joiner in Bristol. By 1870, he resided in Portland and worked as a carpenter. James died on March 25, 1874 at the age of 44.[1]

References cited:

1. ancestry.com
2. MS-323. Log book, 1850-1886.
3. https://familysearch.org.
4. MS-323. Personal account book, 1849-1883.
5. Dodge, Christine Huston ed. *Vital Records of Bristol and Nobleboro in the County of Lincoln, Maine: including the Present Town of Bremen, Damariscotta, South Bristol and the Plantation of Monhegan to the Year 1892.* Vol. 2. Maine: Maine Historical Society, 1947.

Scope and Content Notes

This is a collection of account and log books of the Fossett family. They were a ship captain, mariners and farmers from Bristol, Maine. Records include the account and log books of Captain Henry Fossett as shipmaster. Account and log books have a number of vessel entries per book. These vessels are the *Acklam* (Schooner), *Canima* (Brig), *Charlie and Willie* (Schooner), *Edith Rose* (Bark), *Emma Cushing* (Bark), *J. M. Sawyer* (Brig), *Jasper* (Bark), *Liberia* (Bark) *Ocean Eagle* (Brig), *President* (Schooner), *Samson* (Brig), *Sumer Side* (Brig) and *Thomas Pope* (Bark).

Captain Fossett listed the vessels he commanded, his voyages and the dates in the log book, 1850-1886. In particular, he voyaged to Gaboon, Sierra Leone and Cape of Good Hope on the *Thomas Pope* (Bark), *Liberia* (Bark) and *Edith Rose* (Bark), respectively. He documents cargo sales for the *Edith Rose* (Bark) when on the West Coast of Africa in account book, 1848-1867.

Log book, 1850-1886, has three newspaper clippings about the American Colonization Society and the re-colonization of African Americans. The *Liberia* (Bark) with Captain Fossett as master transported African Americans to Monrovia, Africa. One of the clippings claims Fossett made thirty trips to Africa with them as passengers. There is also a report on December 2, 1872 by Captain Fossett aboard the *Liberia* (Bark) of Captain Peterson from Searsport, Maine with his wife, children (one 21 months, other 9 months), stewardess and four men on a small boat stranded at sea after losing the *Bennington* (Ship). They had been in this small boat for two days without food or water. Captain Peterson lost eight men on the ship *Bennington*. Captain Fossett also wrote the brief stories: “Brilliant Whitewash” “Tricks with Cards” and “A Puzzled Yankee” in the same log book. There is also a drawing of his land in Bristol, Maine and blueprint sketches of house interiors. He also sketched the *Dove* (Brig) and *Tornado* (Brig).

The collection captures tragedies at sea. The log book, 1868-1871, notes the death of Edward Bojoura on May 16, 1869 and his burial at sea. Crewman Isaac Luke jumped overboard

when aboard the *Jasper* (Bark) on July 12, 1870. Captain Fossett wrote that Luke went crazy for eight to ten days before he plunged to his death. Fossett records in the same log book "Verse on Fathers Grave Stone" with an accompanying epitaph.

Account book, 1859-1871, notes seamen wages and accounts. This includes clothing, shoes, soap thread, needles and tobacco for seamen as well as washing fees. On page 34 in the account book, 1859-1874, are passage listings for the S. M. William's family of five from Sinoe to Monrovia in addition to Mrs. John Denny and boy Robert Walker. In the same account book, page 144 notes palm oil purchases in Liberia when aboard the *Ocean Eagle* (Brig) by Captain Fossett. The account book, 1862-1871 includes purchases of jewelry such as necklaces, pins, bracelets, earrings and lockets to sell in Monrovia, Africa. This same account book documents the cost of construction for a barn (22 x 30) in 1863. Account book, 1873-1872, shows sales of "Florida Water" in Africa.

The personal account book lists the cost of his father's grave stone at $25 in 1869 and his mother's grave stone at $20 in October 1880. It also shows that Henry Fossett and Leonard Fossett kept their personal accounts together. On November 28, 1863 he remarked that the local school house was painted.

Processing Notes

The collection of eight account books and two log books were arranged into series and subseries. Account and log books pertaining to vessels were placed in **Series I. Vessel records**. Series I. was categorized further into subseries: *Subseries IA. Account books* and *Subseries IB. Log books*. Account and log books were organized chronologically within their respective subseries. **Series II. Personal accounts** is a personal account book of Henry Fossett when at Bristol, Maine with some additional vessel records. Loose papers found in account and log books were placed in folders and kept with the proper account or log book.

Description of Series

Series I. Vessel records (n.d., 1848-1886)

Subseries Ia. Account books

Account book, 1848-1867, for the *Acklam* (Schooner), *Canima* (Brig), *Edith Rose* (Bark), *Emma Cushing* (Bark), *J. M. Sawyer* (Brig), *President* (Schooner) and *Samson* (Brig) with Captain Fossett as master. Loose papers found inside the account book include receipts (wages, misc.) and Yates and Porterfield correspondence (brief note, start of a letter).

Account book, 1859-1871, for the *Edith Rose* (Bark), *J. M. Sawyer* (Brig), *Jasper* (Bark), *Ocean Eagle* (Brig) and *Samson* (Brig) with Captain Fossett as master. The account book documents crewmen accounts and wages. Loose papers found inside account book include math calculations and a blotter card.

Account book, 1859-1874, for the *Edith Rose* (Bark), *Ocean Eagle* (Brig), *Samson* (Brig) and *Thomas Pope* (Bark) with Captain Fossett as shipmaster. Loose papers found inside account book include math calculations, blank seamen wage receipts, blank shipping forms, accounts

general, correspondence (captain's note), freight & cargo for the *President* (Schooner) and a freight list.

Account book, 1862-1871, for the *Edith Rose* (Bark) with Captain Fossett as shipmaster. The account book reports crew wages and accounts. Loose papers found inside account book include blotter card, math calculations, accounts general, ship stores list and prices for the *Edith Rose* (Bark), crew wages for the *Edith Rose* (Bark) and correspondence concerning the *Edith Rose* (Bark) and *Cardenas* (Bark).

Account book, 1868-1880, for the *Edith Rose* (Bark), *Jasper* (Bark), *Liberia* (Bark) and *Thomas Pope* (Bark) with Captain Fossett as shipmaster. The account book includes crew wages on page 13. Loose papers found inside the account book include incoming correspondence concerning the *Jasper* (Bark) and a home owners insurance policy, plus an additional receipt.

Account book, 1873-1882, for the *Sumer Side* (Brig) [possibly the brig *Sunnyside*] and *Thomas Pope* (Bark) with Captain Fossett as shipmaster.

Account book, 1874-1881, for the *Thomas Pope* (Bark) and *Liberia* (Bark) with Captain Fossett as shipmaster. Loose papers found inside account book are accounts general with one receipt for the brig *Judge Blaney*.

Subseries Ib. Log books

Log book, 1850-1886, for the *Acklam* (Schooner), *Canima* (Brig), *Emma Cushing* (Bark), *Judge Blaney* (Brig), *Ocean Eagle* (Brig) and *President* (Schooner) with Captain Fossett as master. Entry for the *Charlie and Willie* (Schooner) with Andrew Fuller as master.
Loose papers found in the log book include math calculations, incoming correspondence (one on brig *Samson*) accounts general, accounts general for the *Ocean Eagle* (Brig), crew wages *Ocean Eagle* (Brig), freight & cargo *Ocean Eagle* (Brig) and two empty envelopes (one to Captain Fossett on the bark *Thomas Pope*, other to Mrs. Henry Fossett).

Log book, 1868-1871, for the *Edith Rose* (Bark) and *Jasper* (Bark) with Captain Fossett as master.

Series II. Personal accounts (n.d., 1849-1883)

Personal account book, 1849-1883, of Henry Fossett when at Bristol, Maine. Includes Fossett family accounts. Loose papers found in personal account book are math calculations, account summary for Mary Fossett, account summary for Henry and Leonard Fossett combined, accounts general for Mary and Algeron Fossett and accounts general. Additional loose papers are an accounts general noting the *Canima* (Brig) and an account summary for the *Emma Cushing* (Bark).

MS-323 Fossett Family Papers
Container List

Box# **Folder #**

Series I. Vessel records

Subseries IA. Account books

1 1 **Account book, 1848-1867** (various vessels)
(includes loose papers found inside account book, n.d., 1863, 1882-1885)

2 **Account book, 1859-1871** (various vessels, incl. crewmen accts. & wages)
*(includes Loose papers found inside account book, n.d.***)**

3 **Account book, 1859-1874** *(various vessels)*
(includes loose papers found inside account book, n.d., 1852, 1859)

4 **Account book, 1862-1871** (includes crew wages and accounts)
(includes loose papers found in account book, n.d., 1871, 1882)

5 **Account book, 1868-1880** (various vessels, includes crew ages, p. 13)
(includes loose papers found inside account book, 1870-1885)

6 **Account book, 1873-1882** (various vessels)

2 1 **Account book, 1874-1881** (various vessels)
(Includes loose papers found in account book, n.d., [1854])

Subseries IB. Log books

2 **Log book, 1850-1886** (various vessels)
(Includes loose papers found inside log book, n.d. 1860-1868, 1882)

3 **Log book, *Edith Rose* (Bark) and *Jasper* (Bark) 1868-1871**

Series II. Personal accounts

3 **Account book, 1849-1883**
1 ***(****includes loose papers found inside the account book, n.d., 1865-1881)*
2 ***(****includes loose papers found inside account book pertaining to Canima (Brig), 1855 and Emma Cushing (Bark), 1881*